

# FIRST PASSAGE TIME OF SKEW BROWNIAN MOTION

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## Abstract

Nearly fifty years after the introduction of skew Brownian motion by [Itô and McKean \(1963\)](#), the first passage time distribution remains unknown. In this paper, we generalize results of [Pitman and Yor \(2001\)](#) and [Csáki and Hu \(2004\)](#) to derive formulae for the distribution of ranked excursion heights of skew Brownian motion. We then derive the first passage time distribution as a simple corollary.

*Keywords:* Skew Brownian motion; ranked excursion heights; first passage time

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## 1. Introduction

In this paper, we obtain formulae for the distributions of first passage time and ranked excursion heights of skew Brownian motion. Since [Itô and McKean \(1963\)](#) first introduced skew Brownian motion, numerous papers in the mathematics literature have highlighted the special structure of the

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process and connected it to diverse applications; see, for example, [Walsh \(1978\)](#), [Le Gall \(1984\)](#), [Barlow et al. \(1989\)](#), [Ouknine \(1990\)](#), [Decamps et al. \(2006\)](#), [Ramirez et al. \(2006\)](#), [Ramirez et al. \(2008\)](#), and [Ramirez \(2010\)](#).

Skew Brownian motion is broadly applicable to diffusion problems in which the diffusion coefficient is discontinuous in space. For example, [Appuhamillage et al. \(2009\)](#) analyzed mathematical properties of skew Brownian motion as they relate to the convection-dispersion movement of solute through porous media in the presence of a sharp interface. Their work was motivated by experiments in hydrology demonstrating a fundamental asymmetry in the breakthrough curves of solute crossing a sharp interface in opposite directions ([Berkowitz et al., 2009](#)). In this context, the first passage time distribution of skew Brownian motion describes the breakthrough times of solute injected on one side of an interface and observed on the other side ([Appuhamillage et al., 2010](#)).

Similar situations arise problems in physical and natural sciences. For example, Brownian motion has been widely used, and critiqued, as a model of animal movement ([Turchin, 1996](#)), ([Blackwell, 1997](#)). However, there is an emerging consensus among ecologists that landscape heterogeneity is a necessary ingredient of movement models ([Dalziel et al., 2008](#)). In particular, sharp interfaces delimiting two different movement regimes occur at the boundaries of habitat patches ([Schultz and Crone, 2001](#); [Turchin, 1991](#); [Wiens and Milne, 1989](#)), or at other environmental discontinuities such as those in ocean temperatures ([Pinaud et al., 2005](#)) or the level of surface chlorophyll in oceans ([Polovina et al., 2001](#)). In an ecological context, [McKenzie et al. \(2009\)](#) advocate the use of first passage time to model the time required for an organism to first reach a specified location in the landscape (see also [Fauchald and Tveraa \(2003\)](#)), and give as an example the foraging behavior of a predator searching for stationary prey items.

The main contribution of the present paper is to derive the first passage time distribution of skew Brownian motion. We achieve this by first characterizing the distribution of ranked excursion heights of skew Brownian motion. This result generalizes formulae of [Pitman and Yor \(2001\)](#) for the

distribution of ranked excursion heights of the standard Brownian bridge, and analogous formulae presented by Csáki and Hu (2004) for Brownian motion. We then apply our formulae for the ranked excursion heights of skew Brownian motion to derive our main result on first passage time.

The paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, we state the main results. In Section 3, we develop a coupled construction for two different skew Brownian motion processes with different skew parameters that leads to an important relationship between distributions of ranked excursion heights of the two processes, stated in Theorem 3.1. In Section 4, we prove the main results as corollaries to Theorem 3.1. In Section 5, we present several examples that demonstrate the calculations that are possible using the first passage time density, and also the asymmetry inherent in the first passage time of particles crossing an interface in opposite directions.

## 2. Preliminaries and Main Results

To set some notation and basic definitions, let  $B = \{B_t : t \geq 0\}$  be the *standard Brownian motion* process on a probability space  $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, P)$  and let  $J_1, J_2, \dots$  denote the excursion intervals of the reflected process  $\{|B_t| : t \geq 0\}$ . For  $\alpha \in (0, 1)$ , let  $\{A_m^{(\alpha)} : m = 0, 1, \dots\}$  be a sequence of i.i.d.  $\pm 1$  Bernoulli random variables with  $P(A_m^{(\alpha)} = 1) = \alpha$ . Define the  $\alpha$ -skew Brownian motion process  $B^{(\alpha)}$  started at 0 by

$$B_t^{(\alpha)} = \sum_{m=1}^{\infty} \mathbf{1}_{J_m}(t) A_m^{(\alpha)} |B_t|, \quad (1)$$

where  $\mathbf{1}_S$  denotes the indicator function of the set  $S$ .

Now let

$$M_1^{(\alpha)}(t) \geq M_2^{(\alpha)}(t) \geq \dots \geq 0$$

be the ranked decreasing sequence of excursion heights  $\sup_{s \in J_m \cap [0, t]} B_s^{(\alpha)}$  ranging over all  $m$  such that  $J_m \cap [0, t]$  is nonempty. Note that a negative excursion has height zero, and that the height of the final excursion is included in the ranked list even if that excursion is incomplete. Our first main

result gives the distribution of ranked excursion heights.

**Theorem 2.1.** *Fix  $y \geq 0$  and  $t > 0$ . Then for each  $j = 1, 2, \dots$ , the distribution of  $M_j^{(\alpha)}(t)$  is given by the formula*

$$P_0(M_j^{(\alpha)}(t) > y) = \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} 2 \binom{h-1}{j-1} (1-2\alpha)^{h-j} (2\alpha)^j (1 - \Phi((2h-1)y/\sqrt{t})),$$

where  $\Phi(\cdot)$  is the standard normal distribution function.

Now let

$$T_y^{(\alpha)} = \inf\{s \geq 0 : B_s^{(\alpha)} = y\}$$

denote the first time for  $\alpha$ -skew Brownian motion to reach  $y$  and let  $f^{(\alpha)}(x, y, t)$  denote the first passage time density to  $y$  at time  $t$  of  $\alpha$ -skew Brownian motion started at  $x$ . When  $\alpha = 1/2$ , this is the well known first passage time density  $f(x, y, t)$  for Brownian motion (e.g., see page 30 of [Bhattacharya and Waymire \(2009\)](#)):

$$f^{(1/2)}(x, y, t) \equiv f(x, y, t) = \frac{|y-x|}{\sqrt{2\pi} t^{3/2}} \exp\left\{-\frac{(y-x)^2}{2t}\right\}.$$

Notice that  $f^{(\alpha)}(x, y, t)dt = P_x(T_y^{(\alpha)} \in dt)$ . Our second main result gives formulae for the first passage time density.

**Theorem 2.2.** *Fix  $t > 0$ . Then*

$$f^{(\alpha)}(x, y, t) = \begin{cases} g_{x,y}^{(\alpha)}(t) & \text{for } x \leq 0 < y \\ g_{x,y}^{(\alpha)}(t) + h_{x,y}(t) - \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{2}{\pi n} \sin\left\{\frac{\pi(y-x)n}{y}\right\} g_{0,y}^{(\alpha)} * \kappa_{n,y}(t) & \text{for } 0 < x < y \\ f(x, y, t) & \text{for } 0 < y < x \end{cases}$$

and

$$f^{(\alpha)}(x, y, t) = \begin{cases} g_{-x, -y}^{(1-\alpha)}(t) & \text{for } y < 0 \leq x \\ g_{-x, -y}^{(1-\alpha)}(t) + h_{-x, -y}(t) - \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{2}{\pi n} \sin\left\{\frac{\pi(y-x)n}{y}\right\} g_{0, -y}^{(1-\alpha)} * \kappa_{n, -y}(t) & \text{for } y < x < 0 \\ f(-x, -y, t) & \text{for } x < y < 0 \end{cases}$$

where  $g_{x,y}^{(\alpha)} = 2\alpha \sum_{j=1}^{\infty} (1-2\alpha)^{j-1} \frac{|x - (2j-1)y|}{\sqrt{2\pi} t^{3/2}} \exp\left\{-\frac{(x - (2j-1)y)^2}{2t}\right\}$  for  $x < y$ , the quantity  $\kappa_{n,y}(t)$  is the density at time  $t$  of the exponential distribution with parameter  $\lambda(n, y) = \frac{\pi^2 n^2}{2y^2}$ , and  $h_{x,y}(t) = \frac{\pi}{y^2} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} n \exp\left\{-\frac{\pi^2 n^2 t}{2y^2}\right\} \sin\left\{\frac{\pi(y-x)n}{y}\right\}$  is the well known formula (e.g. see page 296 in [Feller \(1968\)](#)) for the probability that Brownian motion started at  $x$  reaches zero before reaching  $y$ , and that this event occurs in the time interval  $dt$ .

The cases  $0 < y < x$  and  $x < y < 0$  in the first passage time density are clear because all paths starting at  $x$  reach  $y$  without hitting zero and hence they are all Brownian motion paths. In cases,  $x \leq 0 < y$  and  $y < 0 \leq x$ , all paths must cross zero and densities are obtained as a straightforward corollary of Theorem 2.1 and the fact that  $P_0(T_y^{(\alpha)} \in dt) = P_0(T_{-y}^{(1-\alpha)} \in dt)$ . The situation is most complicated when  $0 < x < y$  and  $y < x < 0$ , and one must consider two types of paths from  $x$  to  $y$ : those that cross zero, and those that reach  $y$  before they reach zero.

Notice that when  $\alpha = 1/2$ , we recover existing results for standard Brownian motion. Namely, from Theorem 2.1, we recover the distribution of ranked excursion heights stated in Theorem 3.1 of [Csáki and Hu \(2004\)](#), and from Theorem 2.2 we recover the well known first passage time distribution of standard Brownian motion (this fact is not immediately obvious, but nonetheless true, in most complicated cases when  $0 < x < y$  and  $y < x < 0$ ).

### 3. Relating excursion heights for $B^{(\alpha)}$ and $B^{(\beta)}$

Let  $0 \leq \alpha < \beta \leq 1$ . Consider the following coupled construction of  $\alpha$ -skew and  $\beta$ -skew Brownian motion. Let  $B$  be the standard Brownian motion process and let  $A^{(\beta)} = \{A_m^{(\beta)} : m = 0, 1, \dots\}$  be independently chosen excursion signs so that Equation (1) yields an instance of  $\beta$ -skew Brownian motion.

Next, let  $\{A_m^{(\alpha/\beta)} : m = 0, 1, \dots\}$  be a sequence of i.i.d.  $\pm 1$  Bernoulli random variables independent of  $A^{(\beta)}$  and  $B$  with  $P(A_m^{(\alpha/\beta)} = 1) = \alpha/\beta$ . Define  $A_m^{(\alpha)}$  as follows

$$A_m^{(\alpha)} = \begin{cases} 1 & A_m^{(\beta)} = 1, A_m^{(\alpha/\beta)} = 1, \\ -1 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

By construction, the sequence  $\{A_m^{(\alpha)} : m = 0, 1, \dots\}$  consists of i.i.d.  $\pm 1$  Bernoulli random variables that are independent of  $B$  with  $P(A_m^{(\alpha)} = 1) = \alpha$ . Hence, by using the variables  $A_m^{(\alpha)}$  as the excursion signs in Equation (1), we obtain an instance  $B^{(\alpha)}$  of  $\alpha$ -skew Brownian motion.

We think of this as a two-step process: first, construct  $B^{(\beta)}$  by independently setting each excursion of  $|B|$  to be positive with probability  $\beta$ ; then, for each positive excursion of  $B^{(\beta)}$ , independently decide whether to keep it positive (with probability  $\alpha/\beta$ ), or flip it to be negative (with probability  $1 - \alpha/\beta$ ).

The following theorem is motivated by this coupled construction.

**Theorem 3.1.** *Fix  $y \geq 0$ ,  $t > 0$  and  $\alpha, \beta \in (0, 1)$ . For each  $j = 1, 2, \dots$ , the following relation between ranked excursion heights of  $\alpha$ - and  $\beta$ -skew Brownian motions holds.*

$$P_0(M_j^{(\alpha)}(t) > y) = \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} \binom{h-1}{j-1} \left(1 - \frac{\alpha}{\beta}\right)^{h-j} \left(\frac{\alpha}{\beta}\right)^j P_0(M_h^{(\beta)}(t) > y). \quad (2)$$

Before giving the proof of Theorem 3.1, we state the following lemma from [Pitman and Yor \(2001\)](#), as we use it in the proof.

**Lemma 3.1.** (Pitman and Yor (2001), Lemma 9.) *Let*

$$b_k = \sum_{m=0}^{\infty} \binom{m}{k} a_m, \quad k = 0, 1, \dots$$

*be the binomial moments of a nonnegative sequence  $(a_m, m = 0, 1, \dots)$ . Let  $B(\theta) := \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} b_k \theta^k$  and suppose  $B(\theta_1) < \infty$  for some  $\theta_1 > 1$ . Then*

$$a_m = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} (-1)^{k-m} \binom{k}{m} b_k, \quad m = 0, 1, \dots,$$

*where the series is absolutely convergent.*

*Proof of Theorem 3.1.* For  $\alpha < \beta$ , we have by the two-step construction of the excursion sign  $A_m^{(\alpha)}$  that  $M_j^{(\alpha)}(t) = M_{H_j}^{(\beta)}(t)$ , where  $H_j$  has a negative binomial distribution:

$$P(H_j = h) = \binom{h-1}{j-1} \left(1 - \frac{\alpha}{\beta}\right)^{h-j} \left(\frac{\alpha}{\beta}\right)^j.$$

Hence

$$P_0(M_j^{(\alpha)}(t) > y) = \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} \binom{h-1}{j-1} \left(1 - \frac{\alpha}{\beta}\right)^{h-j} \left(\frac{\alpha}{\beta}\right)^j P_0(M_h^{(\beta)}(t) > y). \quad (3)$$

For  $\beta < \alpha$ , the relation can be inverted by an application of Lemma 3.1. Let  $k := j - 1$  and  $m := h - 1$ . Then one can write (2) as

$$P_0(M_{k+1}^{(\alpha)}(t) > y) = \sum_{m=0}^{\infty} \binom{m}{k} \left(1 - \frac{\alpha}{\beta}\right)^{m-k} \left(\frac{\alpha}{\beta}\right)^{k+1} P_0(M_{m+1}^{(\beta)}(t) > y). \quad (4)$$

We then apply Lemma 3.1 to the sequences

$$b_k := \left(1 - \frac{\alpha}{\beta}\right)^k \left(\frac{\alpha}{\beta}\right)^{-k-1} P_0(M_{k+1}^{(\alpha)}(t) > y), \quad a_m := \left(1 - \frac{\beta}{\alpha}\right)^m P_0(M_{m+1}^{(\beta)}(t) > y).$$

After simplifying, we obtain

$$P_0(M_j^{(\beta)}(t) > y) = \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} \binom{h-1}{j-1} \left(1 - \frac{\beta}{\alpha}\right)^{h-j} \left(\frac{\beta}{\alpha}\right)^j P_0(M_h^{(\alpha)}(t) > y). \quad (5)$$

#### 4. Proofs of Main Theorems

We now observe that the main results announced in the introduction will follow as corollaries to Theorem 3.1. We first prove the Theorem 2.1.

*Proof of Theorem 2.1.* By Theorem 3.1 in Csáki and Hu (2004),

$$P_0(M_j^{(1/2)}(t) > y) = 2 \left( 1 - \Phi \left( (2j-1) \frac{y}{\sqrt{t}} \right) \right) \quad (6)$$

The result is immediate from Theorem 3.1 by taking  $\beta = 1/2$  in (2).

We now use Theorem 2.1 and the following corollary to compute the distribution of first passage time asserted in Theorem 2.2.

**Corollary 4.1.** *Fix  $t > 0$ . Then*

$$P_0(T_y^{(\alpha)} \in dt) = \begin{cases} 2\alpha \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} (1-2\alpha)^{h-1} \frac{(2h-1)y}{\sqrt{2\pi} t^{3/2}} \exp \left\{ -\frac{((2h-1)y)^2}{2t} \right\} dt & \text{for } y > 0 \\ 2(1-\alpha) \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} (2\alpha-1)^{h-1} \frac{(2h-1)(-y)}{\sqrt{2\pi} t^{3/2}} \exp \left\{ -\frac{((2h-1)y)^2}{2t} \right\} dt & \text{for } y < 0 \end{cases} \quad (7)$$

*Proof.* For the case  $y > 0$  and  $t > 0$ , we have the following relation between the distributions of  $T_y^{(\alpha)}$  and the highest excursion of skew Brownian motion started at 0:

$$P_0(T_y^{(\alpha)} < t) = P_0(M_1^{(\alpha)}(t) > y).$$

Thus using Theorem 2.1, one has

$$\begin{aligned} P_0(T_y^{(\alpha)} < t) &= P_0(M_1^{(\alpha)}(t) > y) \\ &= 4\alpha \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} (1-2\alpha)^{h-1} \int_{\frac{(2h-1)y}{\sqrt{t}}}^{\infty} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \exp \left\{ -\frac{z^2}{2} \right\} dz. \end{aligned}$$

The result is immediate after taking the derivative of the above expression with respect to  $t$ .

For the case  $y < 0$ , use the relation  $P_0(T_y^{(\alpha)} \in dt) = P_0(T_{-y}^{(1-\alpha)} \in dt)$  and the case  $y > 0$ .

*Proof of Theorem 2.2.* Let  $T_y \equiv T_y^{(1/2)}$  denote the first time for standard Brownian motion to reach  $y$ . Recalling that  $P_0(T_y \in dt) = \frac{|y|}{\sqrt{2\pi} t^{3/2}} \exp \left\{ -\frac{y^2}{2t} \right\} dt$ ; e.g. see page 30 in Bhattacharya



and Waymire (2009), one can write equation (7) as

$$P_0(T_y^{(\alpha)} \in dt) = \begin{cases} 2\alpha \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} (1-2\alpha)^{h-1} P_0(T_{(2h-1)y} \in dt) & \text{for } y > 0 \\ 2(1-\alpha) \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} (2\alpha-1)^{h-1} P_0(T_{(2h-1)y} \in dt) & \text{for } y < 0 \end{cases} \quad (8)$$

Now note that  $T_0^{(\alpha)}$  is distributed as  $T_0$  under  $P_x$  for  $x \neq 0$ ,  $0 < \alpha < 1$ . So clearly for  $t > 0$ , one has

$$P_x(T_0^{(\alpha)} > t) = P_x(T_0 > t).$$

We prove the case  $y > 0$  in the Theorem 2.2. The case  $y < 0$  is similar.

Case  $x \leq 0 < y$  :

Using the strong Markov property of skew Brownian motion,

$$P_x(T_y^{(\alpha)} > t) = \int_0^t P_x(T_0 > t-s) P_0(T_y^{(\alpha)} \in ds). \quad (9)$$

Then from the first case of equation (8), one has

$$\begin{aligned} P_x(T_y^{(\alpha)} > t) &= 2\alpha \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} (1-2\alpha)^{h-1} \int_0^t P_x(T_0 > t-s) P_0(T_{(2h-1)y} \in ds) \\ &= 2\alpha \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} (1-2\alpha)^{h-1} P_x(T_{(2h-1)y} > t) \end{aligned} \quad (10)$$

By differentiating the above expression with respect to  $t$  and recalling

$$\begin{aligned} P_x(T_y \in dt) &= \frac{|y-x|}{\sqrt{2\pi} t^{3/2}} \exp\left\{-\frac{(y-x)^2}{2t}\right\} dt, \text{ one has} \\ P_x(T_y^{(\alpha)} \in dt) &= 2\alpha \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} (1-2\alpha)^{h-1} \frac{|x-(2h-1)y|}{\sqrt{2\pi} t^{3/2}} \exp\left\{-\frac{(x-(2h-1)y)^2}{2t}\right\} dt \end{aligned} \quad (11)$$

Case  $0 < x < y$  :

Observe that

$$P_x(T_y^{(\alpha)} \in dt) = P_x(T_y^{(\alpha)} \in dt, (T_0^{(\alpha)} \leq t)) + P_x(T_y^{(\alpha)} \in dt, (T_0^{(\alpha)} > t)) \quad (12)$$

We state the following formula for  $P_x(T_0 \in dt, (T_y > t))$ ; e.g. see page 296 in Feller (1968), as we use it to compute (12)

$$P_x(T_0 \in dt, (T_y > t)) = \frac{\pi}{y^2} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} n \exp\left\{-\frac{\pi^2 n^2 t}{2y^2}\right\} \sin\left\{\frac{\pi x n}{y}\right\} dt \quad (13)$$

Since the skew Brownian motion is Brownian motion until it reaches zero for the first time and from the reflection principle of Brownian motion, one can write the second term of the right hand side of equation (12) using equation (13) as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
P_x(T_y^{(\alpha)} \in dt, (T_0^{(\alpha)} > t)) &= P_x(T_y \in dt, (T_0 > t)) \\
&= P_{y-x}(T_0 \in dt, (T_y > t)) \\
&= \frac{\pi}{y^2} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} n \exp\left\{-\frac{\pi^2 n^2 t}{2y^2}\right\} \sin\left\{\frac{\pi(y-x)n}{y}\right\} dt
\end{aligned} \tag{14}$$

For the first term of the right hand side of equation (12), notice that

$$\begin{aligned}
P_x(T_0^{(\alpha)} < T_y^{(\alpha)} < t) &= \mathbb{E}_x \left[ \mathbf{1}_{[T_0^{(\alpha)} < T_y^{(\alpha)} < t]} \right] \\
&= \mathbb{E}_x \left[ \mathbb{E}_x \left[ \mathbf{1}_{[T_0^{(\alpha)} < T_y^{(\alpha)} < t]} | T_0^{(\alpha)}, \mathbf{1}_{[T_0^{(\alpha)} < T_y^{(\alpha)}]} \right] \right] \\
&= \int_0^t \mathbb{E}_x \left[ \mathbf{1}_{[T_0^{(\alpha)} < T_y^{(\alpha)} < t]} | T_0^{(\alpha)} = s, \mathbf{1}_{[T_0^{(\alpha)} < T_y^{(\alpha)}]} \right] P_x(T_0^{(\alpha)} \in ds, (T_0^{(\alpha)} < T_y^{(\alpha)})) \\
&\quad + \int_0^t \mathbb{E}_x \left[ \mathbf{1}_{[T_0^{(\alpha)} < T_y^{(\alpha)} < t]} | T_0^{(\alpha)} = s, \mathbf{1}_{[T_0^{(\alpha)} \geq T_y^{(\alpha)}]} \right] P_x(T_0^{(\alpha)} \in ds, (T_0^{(\alpha)} \geq T_y^{(\alpha)}))
\end{aligned}$$

Using the strong Markov property of skew Brownian motion and since  $\mathbb{E}_x \left[ \mathbf{1}_{[T_0^{(\alpha)} < T_y^{(\alpha)} < t]} | T_0^{(\alpha)} = s, \mathbf{1}_{[T_0^{(\alpha)} \geq T_y^{(\alpha)}]} \right] = 0$ , one has

$$\begin{aligned}
P_x(T_0^{(\alpha)} < T_y^{(\alpha)} < t) &= \int_0^t \mathbb{E}_0 \left[ \mathbf{1}_{[T_y^{(\alpha)} < t-s]} \right] P_x(T_0^{(\alpha)} \in ds, (T_0^{(\alpha)} < T_y^{(\alpha)})) \\
&= \int_0^t P_0(T_y^{(\alpha)} < t-s) P_x(T_0^{(\alpha)} \in ds, (T_0^{(\alpha)} < T_y^{(\alpha)}))
\end{aligned}$$

Using equation (8) and again from the fact that the skew Brownian motion is Brownian motion until it reaches zero for the first time, and  $P_x(T_0^{(\alpha)} < T_y^{(\alpha)}) = P_x(T_0 < T_y)$  (note here  $0 < x < y$ ), one

has

$$\begin{aligned}
P_x(T_0^{(\alpha)} < T_y^{(\alpha)} < t) &= \int_0^t 2\alpha \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} (1-2\alpha)^{h-1} P_0(T_{(2h-1)y} < t-s) P_x(T_0 \in ds, (T_0 < T_y)) \\
&= 2\alpha \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} (1-2\alpha)^{h-1} \int_0^t P_0(T_{(2h-1)y} < t-s) P_x(T_0 \in ds, (T_0 < T_y)) \\
&= 2\alpha \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} (1-2\alpha)^{h-1} \int_0^t P_0(T_{(2h-1)y} < t-s) P_x(T_0 \in ds) \\
&\quad - 2\alpha \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} (1-2\alpha)^{h-1} \int_0^t P_0(T_{(2h-1)y} < t-s) P_x(T_0 \in ds, (T_0 > T_y)) \\
&= 2\alpha \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} (1-2\alpha)^{h-1} P_x(T_{(2h-1)y} < t) \\
&\quad - 2\alpha \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} (1-2\alpha)^{h-1} \int_0^t P_0(T_{(2h-1)y} < t-s) P_x(T_0 \in ds, (T_0 > T_y))
\end{aligned} \tag{15}$$

For  $h \geq 1$ , the convolution integral in the sum of the second term in the above equation can be written using (13) as;

$$\begin{aligned}
&\int_0^t P_0(T_{(2h-1)y} < t-s) P_x(T_0 \in ds, (T_0 > T_y)) \\
&= \int_0^t P_x(T_0 < t-s, (T_0 > T_y)) P_0(T_{(2h-1)y} \in ds) \\
&= \int_0^t \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{2}{\pi n} \sin\left\{\frac{\pi(y-x)n}{y}\right\} P_0(T_{(2h-1)y} \in ds) \\
&\quad - \int_0^t \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{2}{\pi n} \exp\left\{-\frac{\pi^2 n^2 (t-s)}{2y^2}\right\} \sin\left\{\frac{\pi(y-x)n}{y}\right\} P_0(T_{(2h-1)y} \in ds) \\
&= \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{2}{\pi n} \sin\left\{\frac{\pi(y-x)n}{y}\right\} P_0(T_{(2h-1)y} < t) \\
&\quad - \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{2}{\pi n} \exp\left\{-\frac{\pi^2 n^2 t}{2y^2}\right\} \sin\left\{\frac{\pi(y-x)n}{y}\right\} \int_0^t \exp\left\{\frac{\pi^2 n^2 s}{2y^2}\right\} P_0(T_{(2h-1)y} \in ds)
\end{aligned} \tag{16}$$

Then one has

$$\begin{aligned}
P_x(T_0^{(\alpha)} < T_y^{(\alpha)} < t) \\
&= 2\alpha \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} (1-2\alpha)^{h-1} P_x(T_{(2h-1)y} < t) \\
&\quad - 2\alpha \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} (1-2\alpha)^{h-1} \frac{2}{\pi n} \sin\left\{\frac{\pi(y-x)n}{y}\right\} P_0(T_{(2h-1)y} < t) \\
&\quad + 2\alpha \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} (1-2\alpha)^{h-1} \frac{2}{\pi n} \exp\left\{-\frac{\pi^2 n^2 t}{2y^2}\right\} \sin\left\{\frac{\pi(y-x)n}{y}\right\} \\
&\quad \times \int_0^t \exp\left\{\frac{\pi^2 n^2 s}{2y^2}\right\} P_0(T_{(2h-1)y} \in ds)
\end{aligned} \tag{17}$$

By differentiating the above equation with respect to  $t$ , one has

$$\begin{aligned}
P_x(T_y^{(\alpha)} \in dt, (T_0^{(\alpha)} \leq T_y^{(\alpha)})) \\
&= 2\alpha \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} (1-2\alpha)^{h-1} P_x(T_{(2h-1)y} \in dt) \\
&\quad - 2\alpha \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} (1-2\alpha)^{h-1} \frac{2}{\pi n} \sin\left\{\frac{\pi(y-x)n}{y}\right\} P_0(T_{(2h-1)y} \in dt) \\
&\quad + 2\alpha \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} (1-2\alpha)^{h-1} \frac{2}{\pi n} \exp\left\{-\frac{\pi^2 n^2 t}{2y^2}\right\} \sin\left\{\frac{\pi(y-x)n}{y}\right\} \\
&\quad \times \exp\left\{\frac{\pi^2 n^2 t}{2y^2}\right\} P_0(T_{(2h-1)y} \in dt) \\
&\quad - 2\alpha \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} (1-2\alpha)^{h-1} \frac{\pi n}{y^2} \exp\left\{-\frac{\pi^2 n^2 t}{2y^2}\right\} \sin\left\{\frac{\pi(y-x)n}{y}\right\} \\
&\quad \times \int_0^t \exp\left\{\frac{\pi^2 n^2 s}{2y^2}\right\} P_0(T_{(2h-1)y} \in ds) dt
\end{aligned} \tag{18}$$

Recalling that  $P_x(T_y \in dt) = \frac{|y-x|}{\sqrt{2\pi} t^{3/2}} \exp\left\{-\frac{(y-x)^2}{2t}\right\} dt$ , and by (12), (14), (18), one has

$$\begin{aligned}
& P_x(T_y^{(\alpha)} \in dt) \\
&= 2\alpha \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} (1-2\alpha)^{h-1} \frac{|x - (2h-1)y|}{\sqrt{2\pi} t^{3/2}} \exp\left\{-\frac{(x - (2h-1)y)^2}{2t}\right\} dt \\
&\quad - 2\alpha \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} (1-2\alpha)^{h-1} \frac{\pi n}{y^2} \exp\left\{-\frac{\pi^2 n^2 t}{2y^2}\right\} \sin\left\{\frac{\pi(y-x)n}{y}\right\} \\
&\quad \quad \times \int_0^t \exp\left\{\frac{\pi^2 n^2 s}{2y^2}\right\} \frac{(2h-1)y}{\sqrt{2\pi} s^{3/2}} \exp\left\{-\frac{((2h-1)y)^2}{2s}\right\} ds dt \\
&\quad + \frac{\pi}{y^2} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} n \exp\left\{-\frac{\pi^2 n^2 t}{2y^2}\right\} \sin\left\{\frac{\pi(y-x)n}{y}\right\} dt \\
&= 2\alpha \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} (1-2\alpha)^{h-1} \frac{|x - (2h-1)y|}{\sqrt{2\pi} t^{3/2}} \exp\left\{-\frac{(x - (2h-1)y)^2}{2t}\right\} dt \\
&\quad - \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{2}{\pi n} \sin\left\{\frac{\pi(y-x)n}{y}\right\} \\
&\quad \quad \times \int_0^t \frac{\pi^2 n^2}{2y^2} \exp\left\{-\frac{\pi^2 n^2 (t-s)}{2y^2}\right\} 2\alpha \sum_{h=1}^{\infty} (1-2\alpha)^{h-1} \frac{(2h-1)y}{\sqrt{2\pi} s^{3/2}} \exp\left\{-\frac{((2h-1)y)^2}{2s}\right\} ds dt \\
&\quad + \frac{\pi}{y^2} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} n \exp\left\{-\frac{\pi^2 n^2 t}{2y^2}\right\} \sin\left\{\frac{\pi(y-x)n}{y}\right\} dt
\end{aligned} \tag{19}$$

Case  $0 < y < x$  :

Notice that, in this case all skew Brownian motion paths till the first passage time to  $y$  are away from 0. Thus we have

$$P_x(T_y^{(\alpha)} \in dt) = \frac{|y-x|}{\sqrt{2\pi} t^{3/2}} \exp\left\{-\frac{(y-x)^2}{2t}\right\} dt.$$

## 5. Asymmetries in First Passage Time Density

A basic property of the first passage time density of regular Brownian motion is that it is symmetric in  $x$  and  $y$ , i.e., that  $P_x(T_y \in dt) = P_y(T_x \in dt)$  for any  $x, y \in \mathbb{R}$  and  $t \geq 0$ . A practically important feature of skew Brownian motion is that it introduces an asymmetry in the first passage time density for  $x$  and  $y$  on opposite sides of the origin. [Appuhamillage et al. \(2010\)](#)

first demonstrated this by proving that there is a stochastic ordering between the random variables with densities  $P_{-y}(T_y^{(\alpha)} \in dt)$  and  $P_y(T_{-y}^{(\alpha)} \in dt)$  when  $\alpha \neq 1/2$ . In simple terms, it takes longer to cross from negative to positive than to cross from positive to negative when  $\alpha < 1/2$ , and the opposite is true when  $\alpha > 1/2$ .

Our results quantify these relationships further by explicitly giving the densities in each case. We conclude by illustrating the numerically computed densities  $P_{-1}(T_1^{(\alpha)} \in dt)$  and  $P_1(T_{-1}^{(\alpha)} \in dt)$  for different values of  $\alpha$ . In Figure 5(a) we see that  $P_{-1}(T_1^{(\alpha)} \in dt) < P_1(T_{-1}^{(\alpha)} \in dt)$  for  $\alpha < 1/2$ . In Figure 5(b), we recover the symmetry of Brownian motion when  $\alpha = 1/2$ . In Figure 5(c), we see that  $P_{-1}(T_1^{(\alpha)} \in dt) > P_1(T_{-1}^{(\alpha)} \in dt)$  for  $\alpha > 1/2$ .

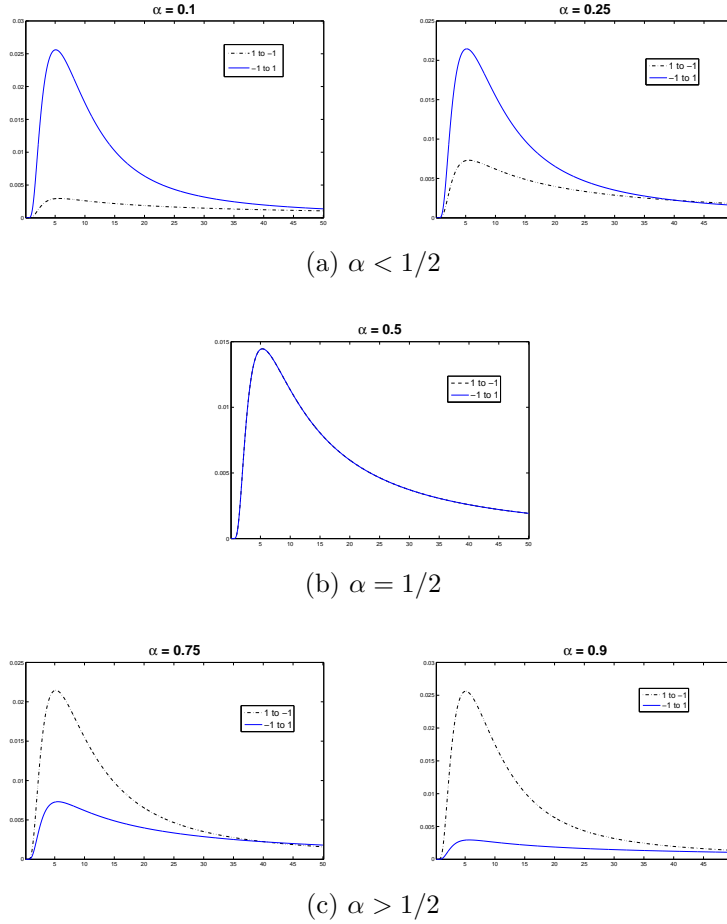


FIGURE 1: The densities  $P_{-1}(T_1^{(\alpha)} \in dt)$  (solid) and  $P_1(T_{-1}^{(\alpha)} \in dt)$  (dashed) for different values of  $\alpha$ .

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